



APPENDIX B: THE AIR OPERATIONS CENTER

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The following discussion outlines the basic geographic air operations center (AOC).

The AOC provides operational-level [command and control](#) (C2) of air component forces as the focal point for planning, executing, and assessing air component operations. The AOC can be tailored and scaled to a specific or changing mission and to the associated task force the [commander, Air Force forces](#) (COMAFFOR) presents to the [joint force commander](#) (JFC). Air Force Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures 3-3 AOC, *Operational Employment—Air and Space Operations Center* and [Air Force Instruction 13-1AOC, Volume 3, Operational Procedures—Air and Space Operations Center](#) provide further detail concerning the structure, functions, processes, and personnel within the AOC.

The primary functions of the AOC are to:

- ★ Develop air component operations strategy and planning documents that integrate air, space, and cyberspace operations to meet COMAFFOR objectives and guidance.
- ★ Task, execute, and assess day-to-day air component operations; provide rapid reaction, [positive control](#), and coordinate and deconflict weapons employment as well as integrate the total air component effort.
- ★ Receive, assemble, analyze, filter, and disseminate all-source [intelligence](#) and weather information to support air component operations planning, execution, and assessment.
- ★ Integrate space capabilities and coordinate space activities for the COMAFFOR when the COMAFFOR is designated as [space coordinating authority](#).
- ★ Issue [airspace control procedures](#) and coordinate airspace control activities for the [airspace control authority](#) (ACA) when the COMAFFOR is designated the ACA.
- ★ Provide overall direction of air defense, including theater missile defense (TMD), for the [area air defense commander](#) (AADC) when the COMAFFOR is designated the AADC.
- ★ Plan, task, and execute the theater air- and space-borne [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance](#) (ISR) mission.

- ✧ Conduct component-level [assessment](#) to determine mission and overall air component operations effectiveness as required by the JFC to support the theater assessment effort.
- ✧ Plan and task [air mobility](#) operations according to the theater priorities.

The baseline AOC organization includes an AOC commander, five divisions (strategy, combat plans, combat operations, ISR, and air mobility), and multiple support/specialty teams. Each integrates numerous disciplines in a cross-functional team approach to planning and execution. Liaisons from other Service and functional components may be present to represent the full range of joint air, space, and cyberspace capabilities made available to the COMAFFOR. The following provides a summary of the major elements of an AOC.

The AOC commander is charged with effectively managing air component operations and establishing the AOC battle rhythm. The AOC commander develops and directs processes to plan, coordinate, allocate, task, execute, and assess air component operations in the [area of operations/joint operations area](#) based on JFC and COMAFFOR guidance. The AOC commander commands the AOC weapons system (but not [air expeditionary task force](#) forces) and should be prepared to direct a joint AOC (JAOC) when the COMAFFOR is designated as the [joint force air component commander](#).

The strategy division concentrates on long-range planning of air component operations to achieve theater objectives by developing, refining, disseminating, and assessing progress toward achieving the COMAFFOR component strategy. The strategy division is normally task organized into four functionally oriented core teams: the strategy plans team, the strategy guidance team, the operational assessment team, and the information operations team. Key products include the [joint air operations plan](#), the air operations directive (AOD), and other COMAFFOR guidance.

The combat plans division applies operational art to develop detailed execution plans for air component operations. The combat plans division is normally task organized into four functionally oriented core teams: the targeting effects team; the [master air attack plan](#) (MAAP) team; the [air tasking order \(ATO\)](#) production team; and the C2 planning team. The division's key products are an area air defense plan, [airspace control plan](#), and a daily ATO, [airspace control order](#) (ACO), special instructions, and joint integrated prioritized target list.

The combat operations division monitors and executes current operations. The combat operations division is also the focal point for monitoring the execution of joint and combined operations, such as time-sensitive targeting, TMD, joint [suppression of enemy air defense](#) supported by theater forces, and joint air attack team. The combat operations division is normally task-organized into four functionally oriented core teams: offensive operations, defensive operations, senior intelligence duty officer team, and interface control team. The division's main products are daily ATO/ACO changes, the airspace control plan, and air defense plan.

The ISR division, in conjunction with the other AOC divisions, plans and executes airborne ISR operations and provides combat ISR support to air component planning, execution, and assessment activities. The ISR division has four core teams: the analysis, correlation and fusion team; the targets/tactical assessment team; the ISR operations team; and the processing, exploitation, and dissemination management team. Major products include: the reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition annex to the ATO (or the ISR collection plan); updated intelligence preparation of the operational environment; air component target nomination list; and intelligence summaries.

The [air mobility division](#) (AMD) plans, coordinates, tasks, and executes the theater air mobility mission. Unlike the other AOC divisions that work solely for the AOC commander, the AMD coordinates with the [director, air mobility forces](#) (DIRMOBFOR) but remains responsive to the tempo and timing of the AOC commander's operation. The DIRMOBFOR is responsible for integrating the total air mobility effort for the COMAFFOR and, in this capacity, coordinates with the AMD on behalf of the COMAFFOR to execute the air mobility mission. The AMD coordinates with the theater deployment distribution operations center and the 618 AOC. The AMD is comprised of [four core teams](#): the airlift control team, the air refueling control team, the air mobility control team, and the aeromedical evacuation control team. Major products include airlift apportionment plans and air refueling inputs to the MAAP, ATO, ACO, and special instructions.
